17

Conflict Resolution

WE LEFT THE EAGLES AND THE RATTLERS transformed by the black magic of group competition into opposed armies. Their minds stocked with hate-filled stereotypes, raiding one another's quarters by night and always ready for battle, it was time for Sherif to work some white magic, and he had some in mind. The large research literature on reducing group tensions suggested that two factors were more effective than any other: (1) noncompetitive contact with the two antagonistic groups having equal status, and (2) a superordinate goal that was important for all, not attainable by the efforts of either group alone but attainable by universal cooperation (Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Allport, 1954). Sherif doubted that equal status contact alone would be effective with really antagonistic groups, and in the absence of a superordinate shared goal might even exacerbate group tensions. Therefore the first part of Stage III was a test of what contact alone could accomplish.

In all, seven equal status contact situations were created: filling out questionnaires at the same time, looking at movies together, shooting off Fourth of July firecrackers together, taking meals in the same mess hall at the same time, and others. None of those contacts, nor *all* of them together, did anything to reduce group friction. When filling out questionnaires, the Rattlers read on their yellow pencils the hated name *Eagle* and refused to use that brand. For the movies and firecrackers the two groups stayed apart from one another and lobbed across the occasional insult. Meals in the mess hall turned into "garbage fights," with rolls and napkins and potatoes as projectiles. What

had been twenty individual eleven-year-olds were now all either little Rattlers or little Eagles, as fixed in their opposition as Hatfields and McCoys or Montagues and Capulets.

Superordinate goals worked, but not fast. The first common problem was created by knocking out the supply of drinking water. All their water came from a storage tank about a mile up the mountain, and when the faucets stopped flowing the boys were told that the problem could be a leakage in the pipe from the tank, at any point along its route. The area was divided into four segments to be inspected and, while everyone offered to help, the volunteers for each work detail were either all Eagles or else all Rattlers. The problem turned out not to be in the pipe but in the valve on the tank, and they all came together there. When a staff member fixed the valve there was general rejoicing and the Eagles, who had no canteens and so were thirstier than the Rattlers, were permitted to drink first. On the hike back there was, for the first time, some good-natured intermingling. Nevertheless, there was another garbage fight at dinner that night.

The second superordinate goal was rental of the movie *Treasure Island.* Everybody wanted to see it, but the sum of seven dollars was needed, and the question was how to divide that among eleven Rattlers and nine Eagles (remember that two Eagles got homesick). Various proposals were made and the one that all could agree to was that each of the eleven Rattlers should contribute thirty-one cents and the nine Eagles each thirty-nine cents, with the counselors adding the odd pennies to bring each group total to $3.50. The agreement was peaceably arrived at, but it is important to notice that equity between groups, not equity for each individual was the goal, so the organization into groups still dominated their thinking. At the movie they adopted segregated seating.

The great event of the last days was a trip by truck to Cedar Lake, a campout there, and then an additional 30-mile drive to the Arkansas border—so they could say they had been in another state. It was taken for granted that they would travel separately in two trucks. Meal preparation and tent-pitching were so arranged as to require the campers to cooperate with one another. One truck was in bad shape, and when it got stuck all twenty boys pulled together on the former tug-of-war rope to get it started (Figure 17-1). In those last days the group lines sometimes disappeared and then, with some change in the external situation, reappeared. After a last evening back at the "house camp," the twenty boys themselves proposed that they return to Oklahoma City in a single bus, and the self-chosen seating did not reflect the Eagles and the Rattlers. One boy cried because camp was over and it had been so much fun.

The many naturalistic observations showing the end of antagonism, the development first of group cooperation and then the fading of group consciousness, were supplemented with quantitative data. Using subtle procedures that never suggested a "study," each boy was led to make friendship choices (sociometric choices). At the end of Stage II, when group opposition was at its

Successful effort to start the truck: Both groups have tug-of-war against the truck.

Getting ready to return home: *All together.*

Figure 17-1. The end of the war between the Eagles and the Rattlers

(M. Sherif, O. J. Harvey, B. J. White, W. R. Hood, and C. W. Sherif, *Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment*, 1961, Stage 3. Courtesy University of Oklahoma Book Exchange, Norman)

peak, almost 100 percent of the friendship choices were made within the same group. At the end of Stage III it was still true that in-group choices were more frequent than out-group choices, but the ratio had become about 65 to 35 percent. Stereotypes were also obtained a second time, and some said they were glad as they had changed their minds. Rattlers now thought that almost all Eagles had become like the Rattlers themselves: *brave, tough,* and *friendly.* The Eagles said as much for the Rattlers. There were no more *sneaky, smart-aleck stinkers.* Just as attribution theory (Part II) says they should, the boys as observers of one another saw personality change as the cause of the new order, but Sherif, of course, knew better. He knew that the boys had changed their thoughts and feelings because of a succession of situations designed to require cooperative effort.

The Robbers Cave and Desegregation

The Robbers Cave experiment was carried out in 1954, and it was in 1954 that the Supreme Court ruled (*Brown* v. *Board of Education*) that in public education the doctrine "separate but equal" has no place and school desegregation was undertaken. In that same year Gordon Allport published his classic *The Nature of Prejudice* and summarized the conditions that reduce prejudice and tension between groups in these words: "Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom, or local atmosphere) ... " (p. 281).

Allport's statement of the conditions necessary to reduce group prejudice—equal status contact in the pursuit of common goals with institutional support—was his elegant distillation of research prior to 1954. It remains, in the early 1980s, an excellent statement of research wisdom on the reduction of group hostilities (e.g. Amir, 1976; Austin and Worchel, 1979; Cook, 1978; Deschamps and Brown, 1983; Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Deutsch and Krauss, 1962; Pettigrew, 1969; Schofield, 1982; Sharan, 1980; Slavin, 1980; Sole, Marton, and Hornstein, 1975; Worchel, 1979; Worchel, Andreoli, and Folger, 1977). Allport's statement incidentally describes the conditions that eliminated hostility between the Eagles and the Rattlers. The two groups after one week of pursuing common goals, with equal group status and the support of authorities, ceased to attack one another, gave up their negative group stereotypes, voluntarily chose to desegregate at meals and on the bus ride home, and began to treat one another as individuals, choosing friends on the basis of personal qualities. Although the Supreme Court heard testimony from social scientists on school desegregation (e.g. Floyd Allport et al., 1953), it cannot be said that desegregation efforts have eliminated group hostilities in the wonderful way that Sherif's Stage III did for the Eagles and the Rattlers.

Gerard and Miller (1975) report on a very thoroughgoing longitudinal study in Riverside, California, that, long after the schools there desegregated, white, black, and Hispanic-American students continued to "hang out" in clear ethnic clusters. Stephan (1978) carefully reviewed all the research evidence on the impact of school desegregation some twenty-five years after the Court's decision and drew several tentative conclusions. The achievement level of blacks did sometimes increase after desegregation and only rarely decreased. Desegregation as such seemed not to reduce the prejudices of whites toward blacks, though most national surveys have shown some reduction of such prejudice as a result of all social forces combined. As for the prejudice of blacks toward whites, that seemed usually to increase after desegregation. Janet Ward Schofield (1982) in a detailed study of a model integrated school found that interaction and friendship, at first totally governed by group attitudes, did very slowly start to take account of personal qualities over a period of three years, and yet racial attitudes changed very little. Wax (1979) found a similarly complex pattern in an intimate portrait of five desegregated schools.

In general I think social psychologists have been disappointed in the impact of school desegregation on intergroup hostilities, but it cannot be said that this great national experiment disconfirms the hypothesis that equal status contact in the pursuit of common goals, with institutional support, reduces group hostility. The hypothesis is not disconfirmed by desegregation because it is not tested by desegregation. Institutional support from families, school boards, and neighborhoods has, to put it mildly, often been absent. Even more seriously, however, equal status contact in the pursuit of common goals is not what goes on in desegregated schools. What goes on is poignantly described by Schofield in this vignette:

> The teacher says, "If you have 400 and 90 and 7½, how much would that be total?" He calls on Dan (black), whose hand is not raised. Dan doesn't know the answer. Three children, all white, are waving their hands in the air. Mr. Little persists with Dan and writes the three figures on the board. By this time there are six white and Dan and writes the three figures on the board. You can hear little moans of two black children waving their hands in the air. You can hear little moans of excitement and pleas like, "Call on me." Finally, Dan gets the answer. This class is roughly two-thirds black. [Schofield, 1982, p. 22]

Gordon Allport does not, in his 1954 book, say much about the nature of the status that must be equal, if prejudice is to be reduced, but he seems mainly to have had formal status in mind. Formal status applies to organizational roles such as manager and employee or teacher and pupil, and in the desegregated classroom that kind of organizational status is equal for white and black students. However there are other kinds of status in which majority and minority students are not equal. The socioeconomic status of blacks (income, life-style, and so on) is on the average lower than the socioeconomic status of whites, an inequality that children are aware of. Most important, the scholastic achievement status of black students is, on the average, lower than that of white stu-

dents; that fact was a major reason for the desegregation decision. However the difference in achievement levels means that the contact in the desegregated classroom is, like the interracial contact in Schofield's little vignette, not equal status contact. The black students were doing less well, on the average, than the white students in the incident described.

The students in Schofield's story are also not cooperating in pursuit of a common goal. They are *competing* in pursuit of individual goals. You may have forgotten the fierce competitiveness of small children, but Schofield's description of the pants-wetting eagerness to be called on by the teacher should bring it all back. There is the effort not to let the teacher catch your eye when you do not know the answer. There is the shame at giving the wrong answer and the resentment felt for the student who gleefully corrects you. Worst of all, if you habitually do not know the right answer the teacher comes to feel awkward about calling on you and may eventually not do so at all, and you become a kind of public embarrassment.

In a cooperative social situation the attainment of one person's goal enhances the probability of attainment of the goals of others in the group. In a competitive situation, however, the attainment of one person's goal lowers the probability of the attainment of the goals of others (Deutsch, 1949; Slavin, 1980; Worchel, 1979). Competition, therefore, threatens to produce unequal distribution of rewards or resources. The important rewards or resources in a classroom are the approval of the teacher and of peers. The entitlements or relevant investments are supposed to be achievements, academic primarily, but also athletic and social. Probably those investments are seldom the only ones considered, since teachers do find one student more likable than another and may find one race more likable than another. Usually, however, the distribution of classroom rewards is proportional to classroom achievements.

The lower average achievement of minority students and resultant lower rewards and higher costs can be perceived as fair or legitimate, but in that case minority students must suffer low self-esteem. Alternatively, minority students can perceive their lower rewards and higher costs as unfair, as undeserved, but in that case they must feel anger and behave in a hostile way. It is possible for a minority student to cope with inequity of which he or she is the victim by limiting social comparison to a group doing no better than oneself and to restrict social contacts to that group, which is likely to be a same-race, same-class group. It is also possible to respond to perceived inequity on the individual level by developing what Tajfel calls a group "voice" designed to elevate social identity. All of those things happen in circumstances of competition (Deutsch, 1973; Worchel, 1979), and none of them reduces intergroup hostility, stereotyping, and segregation.

The desegregated classroom is almost always a highly competitive situation in which minority students receive less than their share of rewards and so occupy a lower status. In short, desegregation of the schools as such does not produce equal status contact and cooperative pursuit of a common goal. In a

few cases, however, efforts have been made to alter the classroom experience so as to realize the conditions—equal status contact and cooperation—that social psychology identifies as necessary for the reduction of group hostility. The most interesting of those efforts is the introduction by Elliot Aronson of the "jigsaw classroom" into schools in Austin, Texas.

The Jigsaw Classroom

When the schools in Austin were desegregated by extensive busing, the result was increased racial tension among blacks, Mexican Americans, and Anglos, which erupted into violence in the high schools. The superintendent of schools consulted with Aronson, an eminent social psychologist, then at the University of Texas. Aronson thought it was both more possible and more important to try to prevent racial hostility than to try to control incidents in the high schools, so he concentrated on the elementary school classroom. It did not take him long to recognize that what was going on in these classrooms was not what Allport had recommended in 1954 but was fierce competition between persons of unequal status.

Aronson undertook to change the reward structure of the elementary school classroom from one of unequal competition to one of cooperation among equals without making any changes at all in curriculum content. The "jigsaw classroom" is a way of learning that can be employed with any content whatever. Suppose, for example, that we had a class of thirty, some Anglos, some black, and some Hispanic Americans, and that the lesson the teacher has assigned is to learn the main facts in the life of Joseph Pulitzer. The class might be broken up into five groups of six each, with the groups equated as nearly as possible in ethnic composition and in scholastic achievement levels. The lesson, Pulitzer's life, would be divided into six parts, with one part given to each member of the six-person groups. The parts might be paragraphs from Pulitzer's biography: (1) how the Pulitzer family came to the United States, (2) Joseph's childhood and education, (3) Joseph's early jobs,—and so forth. The parts are like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle in that they fit together to create a total picture.

Each group member would be given time to study his or her portion of the full biography. The group would then convene, and each member in turn would undertake to teach his part of the whole. Eventually, perhaps an hour later, everybody would be tested on the full life of Joseph Pulitzer and would receive an individual score—not a group score. Each person therefore must learn the full lesson, but each would be dependent on five others—the members of his group—for parts of the lesson that could be learned only from them. They in turn would be dependent on him. There is complete mutual inter-dependence. The attainment of one member's individual goal (learning his part well) facilitates the attainment of every member's goal (learning the full life). The jigsaw classroom calls for cooperation in pursuit of a common super-ordinate goal. If you recall that point in Sherif's Stage III, when the water supply failed and Rattlers and Eagles alike were given individual segments to search, for the path of the water pipe, it should be clear that the jigsaw classroom is an abstract equivalent of Stage III. Is it comparably effective in reducing group hostilities?

Aronson, with various groups of associates, did a pretest (Aronson et al., 1975), a large-scale experiment (Blaney et al., 1977), a replication with additional controls (Geffner, 1978), and a replication focused on the effect of the jigsaw classroom on academic performance (Lucker et al., 1977). In addition to the reports on individual studies there are several general summaries (Aronson et al., 1975, 1978; Aronson and Bridgeman, 1979; Aronson, Bridgeman, and Geffner, 1978). Control groups in one experiment or another have included small groups taught by teachers in traditional competitive fashion and small groups taught in new ways which did not entail cooperation. Dependent variables, typically assessed before and after the learning experiences, have included liking for group members as opposed to liking for class members generally, liking for school, self-esteem, perceptions of the academic abilities of ethnic groups, prejudice toward ethnic groups, and academic performance on the lessons assigned. The jigsaw classroom was not introduced as a trivial one-time intervention. In the main experiment, for instance, fifty-three groups from seven schools met for forty-five minutes a day, three days a week, over a total period of six weeks.

What did the jigsaw classroom accomplish? Apparently quite a lot. "Summarizing all the research on the jigsaw technique [e.g. Blaney et al., 1977; Geffner, 1978; Lucker et al., 1977], it appears that this interdependent learning method enhances the students' self-esteem, improves their academic performance, increases liking for their classmates, and improves some of their interethnic and intraethnic perceptions" (Aronson et al., 1978). Of course this is a summary statement taken out of context, and the full context adds many qualifications. I find, however, that the idea of the jigsaw classroom seems so right and the metaphor so powerful that I resist reading the qualifications, let alone the numbers in the tables in the original articles, because I feel that the jigsaw classroom must work. Besides, I want it to. The only thing is—If, indeed, it accomplishes all the good effects described, how does it happen that the jigsaw classroom has not been put into effect everywhere and race prejudice eliminated?

In part the answer lies in the magnitude of the effects obtained. If you look at the numbers, you find that most effects were small. In the main experiment (Blaney et al., 1977) jigsaw students liked their groupmates better, on the average, than they did the other members of the class, but on a scale from 1 to 7 the values were 4.26 for groupmates and 4.22 for other classmates. In the same experiment jigsaw students increased in self-esteem from pretest to posttest, from 20.62 to 21.98 on a scale from 4 to 28. Those and other results are statistically significant when proper comparisons are made with control subjects, but

the levels of significance are not very high and the effects are not whopping. Of course it is our own fault that we were so taken with the idea of the jigsaw class-room that we imagined larger effects.

The impact of research on the jigsaw method is also diminished by the fact that the results that turn out to be significant are not quite the ones we most hoped for. Geffner (1978) found that Anglo students' perceptions of how His-panic American students view themselves and their classmates improved. You have to read that sentence twice to notice that it does not say, as we would have most hoped, that Anglo students improved their perceptions of Hispanic Americans, or came to think more highly of them. Blaney and associates (1977) found that Hispanic American students in the jigsaw groups like school better after the learning experience than before. However, Hispanic American stu-dents in control groups taught by traditional methods also liked school better after the six-week trial, only the increased liking registered by the controls was about eight times as great as that registered by the experimental subjects.

It is not the fault of the investigators that their results are modest in size and complicated to interpret. They make the qualifications clear, and the modest magnitude of the results is perhaps a good match for the modest magni-tude of the intervention—a mere forty-five minutes a day, three days a week, for a few weeks. A larger intervention might well produce larger and more interpretable effects. Ultimately I do not think it is disappointment with results that accounts for current neglect of the jigsaw classroom. My guess is that there is a problem with the jigsaw plan, a problem, interestingly enough, that is con-cealed by the metaphor of the jigsaw puzzle.

If the pieces of a real jigsaw puzzle were doled out—one to a person—and then assembled by the group, one would expect any one person to do about as well as any other in adding his bit to the total. There is almost no skill element involved in fitting a particular piece and so assembling a real jigsaw puzzle would be a case of cooperation among equals in achieving a superordinate goal. Suppose, however, that we shift the metaphor and call the same group learning arrangement by a different name: the "baseball classroom."

Why baseball? What has the procedure in common with the game? Nothing superficial; no parts that are fitted together. However, the members of a baseball team do cooperate in the interest of a superordinate goal: winning the game. The attainment of each individual's goal (pitching a no-hit inning; catching a fly ball; hitting a home run) increases the probability of attaining the group goal. While individuals do not contribute distinct pieces of a picture, they do play distinct roles in a process, and the roles are called by such names as pitcher, catcher, first baseman, and so on. So the interdependent classroom has about as much abstract resemblance to baseball as it does to a jigsaw puzzle. In one respect, however, the two metaphors, or models, are very unlike. There is a very large skill element in playing the various roles in baseball, much larger than there is in fitting the various pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

Is baseball cooperative or is it competitive? It is both, but it certainly is not

purely cooperative. Suppose someone is not very good at baseball. A high school team would probably make him the right fielder. A team depends on its right fielder, but the occasions of critical dependence are not numerous. Still they do arise, as with the fly to right that might easily—most would think—be caught. Baseball, unlike soccer, football, or hockey, has the interesting property of repeatedly exposing individual performance in maximal degree. The right fielder positioning himself to catch the ball is the object of universal attention—and assessment. If the individual fails to perform up to some stan-dard, then the interdependence of the players on the team ceases to be an agreeable feature and becomes an excruciatingly painful one. If you drop that fly ball you not only let yourself down, you *let down the team!* Few social experi-ences are more painful at high school age.

In the research on the interdependent classroom there are indications that it was sometimes more like a baseball game than like assembling a jigsaw puzzle. For instance, in the main experiment those Hispanic American students who were controls and received six weeks of traditional teaching liked school better at the end than did the Mexican-American students who had six weeks of interdependent small group learning. The authors write: "It seems possible that the latter result may be due to the language and communication problems of many Hispanic American students, problems which initially may be exacer-bated by being forced to teach material and speak with classmates in English" (p. 126). And in an article for *Psychology Today* Aronson and his collaborators (1975) describe the plight of a student whom they call "Carlos." Carlos, they suggest, stammers and hesitates in presenting his part of the lesson because of a language problem, and the other kids resort to ridicule and teasing. "Aw, you don't know it," accused Mary. "You're dumb; you're stupid. You don't know what you're doing" (p. 47). Carlos was, it seems, in the position of an inept right fielder.

The inventors of the jigsaw classroom suggest that Carlos would benefit in the end from having his language problem repeatedly exposed. In a traditional classroom it might simply go unexposed by a teacher who is embarrassed for him or perhaps considers him beyond help. That could well be true of any particular Carlos trying to improve his English, but Carlos is only a sign of a general problem intrinsic to the design of the jigsaw classroom. There is inevit-ably an element of skill in the task of teaching the group your portion of the lesson, an element of skill greater than is required to fit a piece into a jigsaw puzzle. With the Joseph Pulitzer lesson the main skill would be English fluency, and all students could be expected soon to attain a minimal competence in that skill, but the lessons in successive grades would have to become progressively more difficult, extending to literature, sentence-diagramming, algebra, and so forth, and the skill element in teaching a portion of a lesson ever greater. What would happen then?

Academic achievement is necessarily not a team sport; it is a game of indi-vidual competition, because it is the game that introduces all the serious games

that come later and determines the level of individual entry into those games: blue collar jobs, nursing, business, teaching, medicine, and so on. And it is evidently not easy to make academic achievement into a team sport by altering the form of the national government or social structure; school is just as competitive in Communist Russia or somewhat-Socialist Britain as in the United States. In Aronson's jigsaw classroom exam grades are assigned to individuals, not to interdependent groups, and that is the way it must be if the learning method is going to be adopted by real schools. Imagine now that an academically advantaged Anglo student starts bringing home lower grades than usual. What is he likely to say if his classroom has recently been jigsawed? What attribution will he make?

"The teacher has us teaching each other and in our group we've got this kid Carlos who can't hardly even speak English." Irate parent: "You mean you're being taught by a little Chicano!" Or—another possibility—"You mean the black children are doing the teaching! What are we paying the teachers for?" Or some other equally nasty scene. It seems inevitable, given the initial academic inequalities, the dependence of each member on each other member, and the self-esteem bias which causes failures to be attributed externally. The very interdependence that is the point of the jigsaw plan would become a force for group hostility, so the jigsaw classroom contains, I think, a "self-destruct" feature.

An Ideal School

Social psychology's ideas about the conditions necessary to reduce group hostility—equal status contact in the cooperative pursuit of a superordinate goal—are not unknown to educators, and, when external circumstances have permitted, attempts have been made to operate an entire school program in accordance with them. The best-conceived of those was the Wexler Middle School in the city of Waterford (names are fictitious), and we are all fortunate that a sensitive psychologist, Janet Ward Schofield, studied the first three years of Wexler's operation using the ethnographic methods of participation, observation, and interviewing. When the school opened, a local newspaper wrote: "If anything, Wexler may be too good . . . . But the administration is putting its best foot forward and worrying later about future successes" (Schofield, 1982, p. 1). Less than four years later another paper characterized Wexler as "a racial timebomb ticking toward disaster." It was not the social psychology applied in the school that brought about the change but the impingement on a beautiful experiment of forces in the external situation.

In Waterford the Board of Education had not yet, in the 1970s, devised a workable plan of desegregation, and it was under pressure from the state to do so. Therefore when a new, lavishly outfitted middle school (grades 6–8) was built, the board committed itself to the goal in this school, not of desegregation

only, but of positive racial integration. The target enrollment was 58 percent white and 42 percent black, a ratio reflecting that of the school system as a whole. Admission was to be on an open first come, first served basis from twenty-four elementary schools in the district. Applications from black students came in much faster than applications from white students, and when the school first opened in the fall of 1975 the white quota had not been filled; the ratio was almost exactly 50–50. There were many things that made Wexler attractive to both black and white families including, besides the superlative physical facilities, a superior faculty and an enriched program for high-IQ students, but it was more attractive to blacks, because the schools otherwise available to them were much worse than those available to whites.

While Wexler School did not officially adopt Gordon Allport as its guide to effective integration, its efforts certainly matched his recommendations. In the interest of equalizing formal status 25 percent of the faculty were black, including the vice-principals in charge of the sixth and seventh grades. The school requested more black faculty, but none were available within the system. Neither race was a minority within the school, and neither race had the status of "outsiders," which black students usually have, because the school had no history as a segregated institution, the residential area was racially neutral, and no students had to be bused in.

Equality of achievement status was not attained, but more was done to deemphasize inequality than is usual. Honor rolls were discouraged, and students were not assigned to "fast" and "slow" tracks. Still, there were some hard facts of unequal achievement that no one could fail to see. The enriched high-IQ class, instituted to attract white students, was in fact 75 percent white, whereas the unavoidable special class for retarded students was 70 percent black. Of sixty-eight sixth-grade students who had an "A" average, sixty were white. Behind those differences of student achievement were differences of parental education; most of the black parents had not graduated from high school, whereas most of the white parents had some post–high school education. And there were the attendant large differences of income and life-style.

Institutional support for integration and the goal of racial harmony was unusually strong. The Board of Education was unequivocal in its statements, the opening day ceremonies were a dream of equal dignity, but best of all was the school's principal, a white male to be sure, but an equalitarian idealist with great practical wisdom. The teachers were all supportive of integration, and the parents were at least sufficiently supportive to send their children to a racially mixed school.

Institutional support was good, equality of formal status was good, achievement was unequal between races, but the inequality was less emphasized than usual. Of the general prescription, that leaves only cooperation in pursuit of shared goals to be satisfied. In connection with the jigsaw classroom I suggested that real schooling, with grades that count, cannot be only cooperative with no competition at all. However there can certainly be some cooperation. The

school's principal believed in the importance of interracial cooperative activities and urged his faculty to develop them. One teacher organized a class into racially mixed groups of six students and rewarded them *as a group*, not as individuals, for some activities. For example a group as a whole would be dismissed as soon as it had cleaned up its work space. The great opportunity for cooperation came, however, in extracurricular activities. Students worked to raise funds to buy special equipment for the use of all—just like the Eagles and Rattlers putting their money together to rent *Treasure Island*. Preparation of a Broadway musical was a particularly great cooperative success, because there were many different things to be done requiring a variety of talents.

It should not be thought that the various efforts to facilitate interracial harmony always went smoothly. A white student, fed up with racially mixed groups, complained: "I came here for my own education, not for somebody else's" (p. 43). The belief of the teachers was that academics came first and group relations second, so they would temporarily divide classes into fast and slow learners because, of course, such groups are more teachable. The fact that such groupings also temporarily reintroduced segregation seemed secondary. One teacher (black) posted in the front of the room an honor roll of "Super Mathematicians" despite the general policy of minimizing comparisons.

Even in Wexler's best years, the first two, Allport's conditions for reducing group hostility were a goal unevenly approached and never reached. It is not surprising, therefore, that the results were quite mixed. On the one hand racial "incidents" were extremely rare. On the other hand black and white students tended to resegregate themselves whenever groupings were voluntary, as in the cafeteria and on the playground. At the end of three years there were numerous black–white friendships, but they were limited to school hours; the friends did not go to one another's homes or meet on weekends.

Interracial behavior changed more than beliefs did. The stereotypes of the blacks, in the minds of both black and white students, was that they were physically tougher, more combative, and more assertive, outstanding at athletics but poor at academics. Whites were thought by all students to be smarter, harder working and more rule-abiding. Blacks also thought whites conceited; whites found blacks intimidating. And yet, as the three years at Wexler passed, there was more voluntary racial mixing, and almost all students interviewed at the end of three years thought relations between the races had either improved or stayed the same; very few said they had deteriorated. Black students saw substantially more improvement than did the white students.

One lesson was learned perfectly: to speak of race at all was taboo. Friends of mine who teach in the Boston public schools tell me that that taboo operates in all racially mixed schools. It is not an impressive achievement, because it is simple verbal compliance and is limited to mixed-race school settings. Another facet of Wexler's school culture that is common in racially mixed schools was the belief of the teachers that they themselves had become "color blind." A teacher in such schools will often say, running over the names in his class-

book, that he could not tell you whether a given student is black or white, because he treats each as an individual. That may sometimes be true, but what is most clear about the claim is that it expresses what many teachers think of as a teaching ideal. However the taboo on any talk about race and the teachers' contention that they themselves are color blind may be unhealthy in view of the abundant evidence from voluntary resegregation and social stereotypes that race is attended to by everyone in the schools. Superficial compliance with school ideals may simply mean that real problems cannot be discussed or, perhaps, even thought about.

Beliefs about race and beliefs about gender (masculinity and femininity) interacted in a very interesting way at Wexler Middle School. If black males are more assertive, athletic, and combative than white males, then, in accordance with the usual stereotype of masculinity (Chapter 9) blacks are also more masculine. At Wexler it was clear that the combined stereotypes called into question the masculinity of the white boys and that they sometimes felt intimidated yet unable to make such "feminine" responses as submission or withdrawal. The result was a social–psychological innovation. About forty boys formed a social club called the "Mice." When people think *mice*, they think *white*, but thinking is not saying and so does not violate the taboo against reference to race. What was the club for? Well, it was supposed to be for parties and so on, but mainly it was for protection. If one mouse got beat up, the whole collective would go after his attacker. A number of black students then formed a club called the "Dogs" and for a while it looked as if the Eagles and the Rattlers had been reincarnated, but the school's principal, working adroitly with the parents, got the clubs to break up before they turned into gangs.

If blacks are more athletic, assertive, and combative, and so more masculine, then it is conceivable that they will be more attractive to girls, including white girls. While Wexler school authorities promoted interracial contacts in general, they made a definite exception of romance and sex. The principal explained that the school's existence was conditional, as far as parents were concerned, on opposition to interracial love affairs. Still, there were some star-crossed cases. One white girl, from a wealthy and prominent family, was so seriously in love that the teachers had to keep her under constant surveillance. It is interesting that the cross-race romances all involved a black male and white female, never a black female and white male, and the same asymmetry applies to other schools and to interracial marriages. Janet Schofield suggests that the asymmetry may result in part from the fact that the supposed black traits, which make the black male seem more masculine, also have the effect of making the black female seem less feminine.

The approximately Allportean social climate at Wexler Middle School produced in its first three years what Schofield calls "a definite, but relatively modest, improvement in relations between black and white students" (1982, p. 157). Some of those at the school who were most committed to the ideal of integration were hoping soon to bring off a genuine success story. However,

events external to the climate of the school were developing in a way that would eventually change the climate. Wexler at the end of its first year was perceived as a great success, and then the Board of Education announced a plan to open another middle school, the Maple Avenue School, in a converted building nearly three-quarters of a century old. Maple Avenue School would receive assigned students from several all-black elementary schools, so Maple Avenue, a very inferior facility, would be all-black, while excellent Wexler had a 50–50 ratio. Several groups of people began to make social comparisons, and they came to different conclusions about equity or justice.

Black parents saw it this way: Wexler in its first year had had difficulty meeting its target percentage for whites (58 percent) and in the end enrolled only 50 percent whites, which included *all who had applied* right up to the last minute. Hundreds of black applications had been turned down, and, for the second year of Wexler's operations, the hundreds of blacks turned down were mostly assigned to Maple Avenue. Why should white children all have the alternative of Wexler or some school they wanted still more (since none were turned down) when most black children could not get into a school as good as Wexler. In the words of one father:

"Where is the financing coming from to make the school [Maple Avenue] as good as Wexler? . . . The Board is committed to keeping blacks in their place . . . . We are charging the Board with fraud and genocide by unscrupulous administration. You have . . . for over twenty years planned the death of black children. You have killed our children mentally." [Schofield, 1982, p. 186].

A group of black parents brought a class action suit charging that the board had no right to open a segregated inferior facility in view of the availability of Wexler. The judge agreed with them and ordered the board to close Maple Avenue and reassign the students, some of them to Wexler. The board appealed the verdict but, in the second year, yielded to the pressure by increasing the total size of the entering sixth grade and increased the black percentage to 64 percent. The evidence is that the second year went very well, but the image of the school in the city began to change. There was talk of a racial "tipping point" and there were threats of "white flight" from Wexler, two terrible catch phrases which so easily transform reality.

In the third year of its operation Wexler School's total enrollment was only 61 percent black, which is not much above the 58 percent original target figure for whites. Next year it would be 71 percent black, but it was already believed for whites to be at least 80 percent black, and white children, finding themselves with to be at least 80 percent black, and white children, finding themselves with more blacks in school than anywhere else, talked of—another terrible catch phrase—"wall to wall blacks." At the same time the increased total enrollment at Wexler had begun to overload its facilities and change its goals. Cooperative programs and racially balanced classes were being given up. The visionary school principal was fired. By the sixth year, the last of which Schofield gives

an account, Wexler seemed destined to become a racially imbalanced, largely black school, with little in the way of innovative teaching or high ideals.

How can anyone possibly fix the blame? The black parents were right in saying that it was unjust for white students to have Wexler or better when the black students had Wexler or worse. Yet in pressing their rights they set in motion a set of processes sure to make Wexler fail in its goal of interracial harmony and likely to make it fail in its goal of intellectual excellence. But those processes were not inevitable mechanical processes. They went as they did only because people thought and felt certain things. The external processes are not necessarily outside the domain of social psychology, though some are economic and some political, but they are outside the domain of Wexler's Allportean social climate—and beyond the control of those who worked at creating that climate.

Summary

The general prescription for resolving group conflict is equal status contact in the cooperative pursuit of a superordinate goal. The conflict between the Rattlers and the Eagles was resolved not by equal status contact but by cooperation over several days aimed at attaining shared goals. Desegregated schooling in the United States produces some contact, with equality of formal status as pupils, but there is usually serious inequality of academic achievement and always individual competition rather than cooperation. Therefore the small success of desegregation in reducing racial conflict does not disconfirm the value of the general prescription. The jigsaw classroom is a learning situation designed to replace individual competition with group cooperation. It has had some success but is severely limited by a residual competitive feature.

When Wexler Middle School in the city of Waterford first opened in 1975 a serious effort was made to satisfy the conditions of the general prescription for reducing interracial conflict. While it proved impossible fully to realize the ideal, Wexler probably came as close as any public school has managed to, and the result, after three years, was a definite but modest improvement in race relations. However, forces in the external community made it necessary for Wexler to admit too many students, to desert its 50–50 racial balance, and eventually give up its innovative programs and high ideals.

Conclusions

Part VI has been a pessimistic section. Ethnic hostilities seem to be rooted in ethnocentrism, inequitable distribution of resources, and stereotyping, which is simply natural category formation. None of those three can be easily changed,

hence it is not surprising that the reduction of group hostility has turned out to be a discouraging task. But of course a discussion of the social psychology of ethnic hostility that was not pessimistic could hardly be realistic. The history of man and, I will guess, the newspapers on the day that you read this, though I cannot know what day that will be, confirm the universality and resistance to change of ethnic hostility.

> We can easily reduce our detractors to absurdity and show them their hostility is groundless. But what does this prove? That their hatred is *real*. When every slander has been rebutted, every misconception cleared up, every false opinion about us overcome, intolerance itself will remain finally irrefutable. [Moritz Goldstein, "Deutsch-jüdischer Parnass"]

I had intended to let Moritz Goldstein's words end Part VI, but then in June of 1984 I participated in a trifling episode which I would rather end with. My good friend of many years, the painter Dorothy Iannone, who lives in Berlin, was visiting Boston. There are not many people like Dorothy. She lives for art and love and friendship. She has never compromised her goals and somehow this has made her radiantly cheerful and spontaneous. We were walking in the Back Bay area of Boston near midnight. On the stairs of a rundown government building, in the otherwise unpeopled scene, we saw two black boys sitting, one about ten and the other about 5, staring glumly at the ground. Instead of looking aside and politely passing by, in the manner of Americans, Dorothy said: "Hi, darlings, what are you doing?" and gave them a dazzling smile. They looked startled and made no answer, but when we were about 20 feet past them Dorothy looked back and saw the little one looking at her and smiling shyly. She immediately blew him a kiss and he blew one back—from the palm, not the fingers, since he was just a shaver. That was June, and June is the month of promise.